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C O N F I D E N T I A L TBILISI 000719

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/13/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [RU](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: GEORGIA: INCREASED RUSSIAN MILITARY ACTIVITY IN  
CONFLICT ZONES AND BLACK SEA

REF: TBILISI 0697

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN F. TEFFT FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) A non-paper passed to the Ambassador on April 11 from the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicates movements of Russian Black Sea naval forces from Sevastopol into the Black Sea. We believe that this information was passed to the Georgians by the Ukrainians. An April 11 report from United Nations Observers in Georgia (UNOMIG) indicates that Russian forces have taken up five new positions and are manning two former posts in Abkhazia. This activity follows an apparent increase in Russian military forces in South Ossetia, as reported reftel.

Georgian MFA Information

¶2. (C) According to a non-paper passed by the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to Ambassador on April 11, on March 25 the Russian reconnaissance ship Kildin left port, moving in the direction of Novorosiisk. Additional details about movement of Russian Forces during the period of April 4-11 are as follows:

- From April 4-5, the Russian Black Sea Navy deployed four amphibious assault ships from Sevastopol: the Tsezar Kunikov, the Yamal, the Saratov, and the Novocherkassk.
- Over the period of Apr 6-11, the following vessels were slated to depart port:
  - Guided missile corvette, Bora
  - Small guided missile cutter, Mirazh
  - Alligator Class LST Shakhter
  - Naval minesweepers, Turbinist, Ivan Golubets
  - Ocean-going Rescue Tug, Epron
  - Intelligence Gathering Ship (AGI), Liman and GS-86
  - Guided missile cruiser, Moskva
- As of April 6, the following aircraft were noted taking off:
  - Three An-26 aircraft, each with 25 passengers taking off from Anapa airfield
  - K-27 and MI-8 helicopters taking off from Kacha airfield
  - Five SU-24s taking off from Gvardajskij airfield
- As of April 11, the following vessels were planning to depart for the central part of the Black Sea
  - Guided missile ship, Bora
  - Grisha class frigates Suzdalets and Aleksandrovets (Antisubmarine warfare ships)
  - Anti-submarine ship, Kerch'
  - Pontoon Bridge PM-56
  - Ship KIL-150
  - Medium-sized naval tanker Iman
  - Military transporter, General Ryabikov

¶3. (C) UNOMIG observers noted that two previously abandoned

posts of Russian Federation Forces (RFF) posts in Abkhazia are once again manned, and that as of April 7, there are five new locations where Russian forces and their equipment are located. Total personnel strength is estimated to be 900-970. Specifics of the locations, grids, forces in each location and hardware/equipment will be emailed to EUR-CARC.  
TEFFT